

I have not heard one Member on either side of the aisle say how that will happen, when you have drugs that are coming in from all parts of the world. This is counterfeit Voltaren. It is a pill that is used to relieve pain, tenderness, inflammation and stiffness caused by arthritis.

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Every one of these pills is marked with the manufacturer. It looks real. There is no active ingredient in these pills. I challenge anybody who just thinks that we will be safe to come get on a plane to Miami and see the counterfeit drugs that are coming into this country.

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) said the country will be flooded with cheap prescription drugs. That may happen under this bill, but we cannot guarantee that any of those cheaper prescription drugs will have any active ingredients in them. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEKSTRA) asked why the Canadian drugs are 40 percent cheaper. I have a different answer than the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) had. I think they are cheaper because Canadian law allows the government to negotiate with pharmacies for lower prices. And that is what we should do too in this country. We should not go in a roundabout way letting these counterfeit drugs come in, putting our citizens at risk simply because we want lower prices.

Here is the bottom line. We were elected to preserve the health and safety of the people we represent, over 600,000 each. Let us not sacrifice that fundamental right for a convoluted bill that is not even guaranteed to do what it is supposed to do. Vote "no" on this ill-conceived legislation.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Current law allows importation. Current law contains 10 provisions to protect the safety of drug supplies in this country, 10 provisions protecting the safety of those drugs that are imported into this country. This bill that the Members are asked to vote on tonight strikes all 10 of those safety provisions, all 10.

I am going to show the Members tonight what we get if we pass this bill. What we are looking at now is a Web site of a Canadian prescription center where one can order prescriptions from Canada right now which would be legalized under this bill, illegal under current law because the FDA cannot verify the safety of drugs obtained on this Web site.

The FDA obtained some drugs on this Web site to just see what they could get. I want to show the Members what they got. What they got was this drug. This is a drug called Gabapentin. It is used as an antiseizure measure. It is to prevent seizures for people who have all kinds of seizures with all kinds of diseases. Do the Members know where it was made? It was made in India, not in Canada; and it came to an American

over that Canadian Web site. And do the Members know what is in it? Nothing. It is water inside this package. And the folks who buy it in America at these cheap prices we are told they are going to get it for nothing except fake drugs.

Here is another set of drugs to look at. This is one is called Serostim. It is used by HIV/AIDS patients to prevent wasting. This is the authentic one; this is the fake one. The fake one contains nothing but pond water. Imagine giving that to an HIV/AIDS patient. Is the price, half price, quarter price worth it to take a drug like that?

I want to ask the Members something before we end this debate, and I have the greatest respect for those who bring this issue to the floor because I hate the fact that Canada and other countries take advantage of our patients in America, and we have to end those trade imbalances. We have to fight them. We do. We do. But I want to ask one question. If the Members vote to say that safety does not count and Americans increasingly buy these drugs full of nothing but pond water and diluted and old and rotten drugs, are they going to have to face the mother and father the way we faced them this week who said, Why is my son dead, because you did not put FDA regulations into place?

Vote down this bill. It is dangerous for every American. It needs to be defeated.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I am sad to say that for the second time during this Congress, the House has considered legislation offering a false promise to help for seniors struggling to pay for prescription medications.

Last month, the House passed a bill that purported to offer Medicare prescription drug coverage. I have long supported providing seniors with a reliable, comprehensive, and affordable drug benefit under Medicare. I could not in good conscience vote for the bill passed by the House, however, because it would provide only a meager benefit while quite possibly leading to the death of the traditional Medicare program that has served seniors in my district so well.

Congress has an obligation to help Americans who cannot afford the prescription drugs they need. Seniors need and deserve a voluntary, universal, prescription drug benefit under Medicare that can help lower prices using the collective buying power of the Medicare population. But making it easier to bring counterfeit, substandard medicines into the United States is not the way to help seniors get the drugs they need. H.R. 2427 poses a very serious danger—exposing American consumers to unsafe counterfeit drugs.

The evidence of this is well documented. The Food and Drug Administration, which has for nearly a century been responsible for certifying the safety and efficacy of medications sold in the United States, opposes reimportation. According to FDA Commissioner Mark McClellan, "At a time when FDA faces more challenges than ever in keeping America's supply of prescription drugs safe and secure, H.R. 2427 would create new drug safety problems. H.R. 2427 creates a wide channel for large volumes of unapproved drugs and other

products to enter the United States that are potentially injurious to public health and pose a threat to the security of our Nation's drug supply. The bill would do so by taking unprecedented steps that limit FDA's authority to assure the safety of prescription drug products to be used by U.S. consumers.

These sentiments are shared by eight former FDA Commissioners as well as current and former HHS Secretaries Tommy Thompson and Donna Shalala, who both refused to certify the safety of reimportation. The Nation's largest association of physicians, the AMA, also opposes this dangerous policy.

The dangers of reimportation were brought to life recently, when 19 people in Florida were arrested in charges of selling "adulterated" drugs, including fake Lipitor pills imported illegally from England. We were lucky in this case. Sometimes the dangers of counterfeit imported pills don't become apparent until it's too late.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot vote to jeopardize the safety of our supply of medications. The United States is the envy of the world because its medicines are the safest. Opening our borders to the peril of counterfeit drugs is simply a foolish way to increase accessibility. We need a Medicare prescription drug benefit—not a flood of dangerous counterfeits. Do we really want to open our borders to let in drugs from other countries when the worldwide rate of counterfeit drugs is 8 percent.

I urge my colleagues to protect the safety of U.S. consumers and vote no on H.R. 2427.

Mr. UDALL. of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the reimportation bill because it will create a flood of unsafe, counterfeit or ineffective drug products that will end up in the medicine cabinets of millions of Americans, and I do not think it will result in the cost savings that supporters are hoping for.

First and foremost, this issue is about patient safety. I agree with the Food and Drug Administration, the American Medical Association and many physician and patient organizations who say that allowing wholesalers and pharmacists to reimport drugs from foreign countries will pose serious public health concerns for our country. There are no safety provisions in this bill that will assure Americans that the drugs they are taking are safe and effective. And the bill does not provide any resources to the FDA, Customs, or other Federal agencies to test, inspect and certify that drugs coming into our country from around the world are safe.

In addition to the safety issues involved, I do not think this bill will lower the cost of drugs in the U.S. Recently, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office released a report saying that reimportation legislation "would not produce substantial savings to the Federal government." Furthermore, some regulations in the bill will result in higher prices for pharmaceuticals. If our aim is to make drugs more affordable for seniors, Congress should pass a fair and affordable Medicare drug benefit bill.

Pharmaceuticals play a critical role in our health care delivery system. As such, I want to support initiatives that spark research and innovation in the pharmaceutical industry and that increase accessibility to prescriptions drugs. These should not be mutually exclusive goals. Ultimately, I cannot support legislation that will endanger the health of millions of Americans who rely on medications to treat a condition or an illness.